

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A method and apparatus for heat-treating a thermal-direct-printed bar code label, upon which a bar code has been pre-printed by previously exposing predetermined portions of the thermal-direct-printed bar code label to a predetermined temperature level, to a similar temperature level whereby the entire expanse of the bar code label becomes blackened thereby effectively rendering the bar code illegible and unreadable. Packaging containers, having the bar code labels affixed thereon, can therefore be heat-treated and then reused by having a new bar code label affixed thereto.